



My Pursuers at Fault.



My Pursuers at Fault.

12835. aa. 57.

The

HARE,

OR

HUNTING

Incompatible with

Humanity

Written as a Stimulus to

Youth

towards a proper treatment of

Animals.

*Tim'rous of heart, and hard heart
By death in various forms, dark snarers and dogs,
and more un pitying men.*

Thompson



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APOLOGY.

I FEEL it necessary to offer a few words upon the subject of my intrusion. To complain of injuries received, and grievances unredressed, I have sent forth this history of my life and feelings.

Upon very serious occasions, “stones have been known to move and trees to speak,” in bringing forth the “man of blood;” and, if such inanimate beings have been worked up to this pitch upon a cause not their own, may not a Hare also be allowed to be, at least, as eloquent in its own cause?



THE HARE.

CHAP. I.

Sweet native land : whose every haunt is dear,
Whose every gale is music to mine ear :
Amidst whose hills one poor retreat I sought.
BOWLES.

IT was a pleasant bank that I had chosen for my abode, abundantly covered with thick fern, and well defended from the scorching sun and the pelting storm by a hedge, and high overshadowing trees : at the root of one of these, and partly in a cavity of its trunk I made my *form* ; you could hardly have distinguished me amid the multitude of dockleaves and fern by which I was surrounded ;

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for

for my colour so nearly approached to that of many of the objects more immediately around me, that to discover me in my retreat required keener powers of observation than are usually exercised by the eye of the casual passenger. But I was shy by nature; I could not bear to be noticed, and had therefore pitched upon a spot near which no path winded, where I could see to a considerable distance, myself the while unseen: before me was a sloping common, upon which sheep strayed; it descended into a vale where corn fields and orchards intersected each other, and a little stream murmured along: on the opposite side the hills were cloathed with wood, with here and there a hop yard. In case of surprise I had secured myself a retreat along a ditch filled with nettles and high grass, into a neighbouring copse; and I had a *meuse* which gave
me

me freedom of access to a garden which was behind me on the other side of my hedge, where I entered as often as I pleased. My natural timidity was excessive, though as yet I had experienced nothing which could materially confirm it: I dreaded the appearance, and even the sound of many animals; and though I did not absolutely shun the haunts of man, yet I was apprehensive lest any one should behold me: I had frequently heard the voices of persons walking in the garden behind me, and had trembled. My parents had instructed me to shun the sight of man as much as possible: for this reason I was hardly ever out of my form during the whole of the day. My custom was, as soon as I smelt the breadth of morn, and the birds just began to chirrup above me, to go forth from my bed: I then used

to make the best of my way into the corn fields below, or the garden above, and was always cautious to return before the sun was high. With the same care I proceeded in the evening, as soon as the sheep at a little distance from me began to appear somewhat indistinct, and deemed myself happy, if I even heard not the sound of human footsteps during the course of my journey. But with all my timidity, I was as yet but rash ; it was necessary that experience should be added. In the folly of my youth I thought that ' it was sufficient if I suffered no dog nor man to approach me too near, and vainly imagined that if I once fled, it was as impossible to pursue me as it was to match my speed. I had yet to learn, that though one of the most innocent, yet I was the most persecuted of animals, though one of the
most

most defenceless, yet there was as much strength and malice exercised against me as against the strongest, and that nature and art were perpetually employed in the destruction of our race.

CHAP. II.

Vain is her best precaution, though she sits
Concealed with folded ears, unsleeping eyes,
And head couch'd close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away.

THOMSON.

YOUTH is a season of confidence and ardor:—I had long remained unseen, and wandered around my usual haunts unobserved and unmolested; I had now and then seen the shepherd and his dog cross the heath at a distance; I had heard the latter bark in the evening, when

the sheep were driven to the fold, but they had never come nigh me. By degrees I grew more and more confident; for my days of trouble, however they might be near at hand, had not as yet arrived; and as I advanced in strength and size, my courage (if so it may be termed) proportionally increased. The evening often saw me, or ere the sun had ceased to tinge the yellow broom, creeping along the hedge-row to my favourite corn-field. The utility of my parents' instruction was almost disbelieved, the necessity for such excessive vigilance was almost doubted: all that I saw was peace, all that I fancied was pleasure: what harm could there be in loitering half an hour in the morning? a few minutes would bring me home again: even if I were pursued, I could surely match the fleetest creature
in

in speed ; and even if I were to be pushed beyond my usual circle, it was easy for me, by a sudden turn, to evade my pursuer, and regain my *form* ; and then, when I had crept into it, what eye could behold me ? or who would think of looking for me in such a situation ? Upon my invisibility and upon my swiftness I presumed too much : I was young and inexperienced ; I had never yet heard the savage yells of autumn, or felt the chilling hardships of winter : ignorance is apt to presume ; but I was soon to know and to feel that quiet is not always to be found in the woodwalks, nor plenty in the meads.— One morning I was sitting with my eyes half shut, the summer's sun gleaming warmly through the leaves that admitted its rays just upon the spot where I reposed, half hid among my dewy coverture : suddenly

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denly I was roused by a sound of near approaching footsteps : in the first moment of my alarm, I almost involuntarily started from my recess, but recollecting that it would be better to remain still, until the object of my terror was discernible ; I did not dare to stir a muscle, and waited the event in breathless expectation. On the other side of the hedge, along the green path of the garden, I had often heard persons walking at sunset and could distinguish their conversation ; but then I was under no apprehension of being seen, for I knew myself to be perfectly screened from their observation by the intervening hedge.— The sounds approached still nearer and nearer, but by slow degrees ; my agitation was inconceivable : at last they stopped all at once, just at the instant when I expected that my curiosity was about to be gratified,
and

and my anxiety somewhat terminated by the sight of whatever it was that caused my present distress: they seemed to me to be the steps of a man; I listened again; they had totally ceased. I kept by broad eyes extended upon each side in fixed attention, eager to receive any impression; but the abundance of fern by which I was now surrounded, prevented me from observing so accurately as I wished; the fact was, that upon my being first roused, I had actually sprung a little out of my form, and squatted again, in a situation where I could by no means see so well, but where the whole of my body was more open to observation; presently I heard a creeping which approached the spot, a sound as if the breadth were drawn with difficulty: to my great surprise I discerned the shadow of a man and was ready to sink into the earth

earth with affright ; it stopped, and appeared to hold its arm up in the attitude of striking with a stick, which was grasped in the hand ; this was enough for me, for I was no longer in doubt of my perilous situation, nor against whom the blow was designed. So without longer hesitation, just when the arm was raised a little higher, I collected my strength, and started away with the velocity of the wind. The premeditator of my mischief I hardly beheld, but I heard the stick strike the earth, and was pursued by a volley of oaths, which I soon outstripped, hastening to gain my upland wood, where I arrived quite out of breath. Here I began to reflect upon my folly in starting from my retreat and exposing myself to view : but I drew conclusions too much in favour of my persecutor. Perhaps I had alarmed him and disturbed

turbed him by rushing forth: but then he crept upon me by stealth; he surely could not have attacked me in so determined a way, unless I had given some offence. However, it was an useful lesson to me; I was seriously alarmed, nor did I venture to steal from the tangled copse till some time after; when I returned to my form with trepidation, resolving to be in every respect more circumspect in my conduct for the future.

CHAP. III.

— The unusual sound and clam'rous shout
Unheard before :

SOMERVILLE.

ALARMED and mortified at my own fallibility, I was determined to be more upon my guard ; but, as the discovery was merely owing to accident, I conceived that I might still continue in my former position at the root of the tree : I blamed my imprudence, and thought, that but for this I might have remained entirely unnoticed : however, although I formed many resolutions with respect to this part of my behaviour for the time to come, with regard to the general scheme of caution, I was very deficient : It was in vain to be solicitous for concealment at home, when I was hazard-
ous

ous abroad : my fancied security had deceived me in one respect (though I would hardly allow of this) ; but with regard to the fleetness of my feet, oh ! in this respect, I deemed myself utterly invincible, and felt perfectly at ease.

Unfortunately for me, a circumstance which soon occurred, heightened the idea I had formed of my superiority and advantages : It was my custom to go into the vale to feed as soon as the mist began to curl from the stream : I used to proceed across the common, winding about, amidst the prickly furze, and then, with the utmost care, crossing the meadows in an oblique direction, avoided, as much as possible, any cottage or barn that might contain any of the human race ; for these, since the late event in particular, I could not feel an increasing predilection : but I was
obliged

obliged in my progress; to pass a green-sward lane, which I seldom did without feeling, in spite of all my youthful confidence, some faint apprehensions. In a cool evening, when, "Heaven's breath smelt wooingly," and the beetle was humming around, I was descending the fallows, wet with twilight rain, when I fancied that I heard the bark of a dog at a little distance: I ran with some precipitancy to gain the hedge which brought me into the lane; I hoped, that if I could cross it unobserved, I should be somewhat more secure when I arrived on the other side. From that quarter the alarm had proceeded: with trembling I crawled through my meuse, and advanced to the middle of the horse-track, when, at a sudden turn appeared two men: "See, ho!" was immediately vociferated at once by both
of

of them. A panic seized me; whether to go I knew not; but I was instantaneously roused by a dog, which furiously started from behind them, and which, till the moment, I had not observed. I made for my hole in the hedge through which I had just passed. Sudden fright incapacitates us frequently for reflection, or else so confounds us, that though in a certain degree we are capable of reflecting, we are deprived of our accustomed powers of action. I was confused I missed my aim, and the teeth of my enemy had nearly reached me; but I eluded him, and fled along the path with so much swiftness, that I scarcely left the print of my feet upon the damp herbage: my pursuer was not so nimbly-footed, and I had soon the satisfaction of hearing him pant far behind. With what delight did I discern a gate at a little

tle distance! no affrighted soldier pushed to his utmost strength, and fast coursed at the heels by a troop of enemies, ever beheld the turrets of his town across the plain with more tumultuous joy; never did he rush forward with more redoubled vigor, spurring his panting horse to gain the moated gate, within which he expected security and repose, and anticipated the delightful sound of the harsh-grating hinges inclosing him within its friendly barrier. I rushed with great violence between the two lower bars, and found myself in the same field which I had quitted but just before.

CHAP. IV.

———— Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder ?

SHAKESPEARE.

AS is the usage of our race, I sought my safety by flying up the bank which I had just descended with cautious steps and slow. Although my pursuer for a few paces was not very far from my heels, yet, before I had crept through the gate, long before that, I had far outstripped him, and having once gained the field, he never beheld me more.

A circumstance occurred which I thought somewhat singular, and, indeed knew not how to account for. After having crossed several fields, and attained the skirts of the heath,
I stopped

I stopped upon the bank to listen: I certainly imagined that the dog was coming up the track I had so lately trodden, and that he proclaimed it aloud by an incessant kind of noise indicative of satisfaction. He certainly seemed to tread the mazes by which I had ascended, I could hear him advancing higher and higher, as the tones were wafted by the breeze that swept the vale and ascended the upland. It certainly was so: but yet it was strange, passing strange. However, I was highly gratified, when I distinguished the notes still less and less, till they ended with a shrill whistle and call from the men, who seemed to have proceeded far below. I thought much upon this event; it at once inspired and perplexed me: I had never before been chased by a dog; I had learned to be alarmed at the whole species,

species, but I considered them less dreadful than what I had been taught to believe, and despised the idea of being overtaken by any of them. I had very far out-stripped that which had already attacked me, and felt not a little confident upon the occasion: still there was something unaccountable in pursuing me, after he had once lost sight of me. Could he trace my course?—except in the first trepidation of affright, I had taken great care:—along the fallow he might, perhaps, discern the print of my feet; but he continued to ascend higher up the bank, and to follow me by this means through the turnips and the corn. Perhaps he had started some other animal, with which he was engaged, when I was listening in such agitation: this might be my error, but still there was something very mysterious, very inexplicable in the circumstance.

stance. I was not satisfied with my own solution, yet I endeavoured to impose upon myself the belief that I was so: at last I silenced myself with this reflection—that I was invincible in speed. Surely, thought I, whenever I roam abroad, I am continually on the watch; my long ears, directed to whatever quarter I please, collect the faintest sounds; my prominent eyes receive on every side the rays of light, and even enable me to discern those who follow me. My form is a thick embowered retreat, where nought but accident and my own imprudence ever exposed me to discovery: and should all these fail, my legs are a never-failing resource; they are strongly muscular, the hinder are much longer than the fore legs, and in flying up rising ground, I find no inconvenience: let every thing else fail me,
in

in this at least I am secure : in running, no, in running it is impossible I should be overcome.

CHAP. V.

—— My days in ~~one~~ sad tenor run,
And end with sorrows as they first begun.
No parent now remains my griefs to share,
No father's aid, no tender mother's care.

POPE.

ERROR, nothing but error :—my youthful strength and my inexperience gave a false turn to my reasonings, and lulled me into a fancied security. My subsequent disasters have made me look back with astonishment upon the heedless days of my youth.

But there was some allowance to be made for me, when circumstances are taken into consideration which I
am

am about to relate ; little did I know of the protection of parents : I was born amid the inclemencies of winter ; my two brothers and myself were instructed by my mother in all that was necessary for our tender years : but we had not ventured from beneath her eye, when a disaster happened which separated us, and tore me from my dearest ties for ever. We were born in the vale below, in a meadow beside the babbling brook ; it was one of those streams which reduced in the drought of summer to flow within a narrow channel, are in the rains of more inclement seasons swelled to a torrent ; the drizzling showers had for some time rendered our situation uncomfortable, notwithstanding the affectionate solicitude with which our mother endeavoured to protect us : but one night we were suddenly roused by the rushing sound of waters,

waters, and were overwhelmed, before we were thoroughly awakened; whatever became of my dear parent and the rest of her offspring, I knew not; this I know—that I never beheld the latter more: in all probability they were carried away by the flood and drowned, and I can only recollect their parting screams. The horrors of that hour are too indelibly impressed upon my mind, ever to be effaced, as long as “memory holds her seat.” No one who has not experienced it, can conceive how dreadful it is to struggle with rushing waters, when darkness impenetrable hovers around.—I had not attained my full strength, and though I strove with my little might, what could it avail? The billows were irresistible; the stream passed over me; its eddies whirled me round; I was hurried away.

I had not quite lost my sense,
C when

when I was thrown into a situation where the waters left me shivering and helpless. The morning awakened me to sights of woe: at the first gleam of light I discovered the meadow afloat, and the place of my nativity immersed beneath a brown deluge. I had never strayed beyond the inclosures of the small field, but I recollected the spot whereon I now stood; I had often sported as far as the corner where a hay-stack stood, half of which had been cut down almost to the ground, for the purpose of foddering cattle; and upon this I was thrown. I got down as soon as I could; already instructed, in part, how to chuse my food, I felt grateful that the disaster had not occurred before, when I should have been more helpless than I found myself at present. But my situation was cheerless: suddenly forced from the downy protection of a parent,
and

and but half instructed in the means of preservation, the world was all before me, and my condition by no means enviable.

So the shipwrecked mariner, when the surge has left him upon an unknown shore, surveys at day-break the country he is about to enter: he ascends to the top of the rock and casts his eyes around:—whither shall he go?—to what quarter shall he direct his devious steps? The night was cold and dark, the wild winds whistled around his head; he waited for the light with anxiety, that he might discover where he had been thrown, but the light beams upon him, and does not take away his apprehensions:—with doubts and fears he sets out to explore the interior of the country; perhaps the wild beast is already prowling about to seize him; perhaps the native, still more ferocious,

lurks at hand eager to strip him ; or, it may be, to cover him with wounds, and leave him to perish on the plain : he advances, each thicket seems to contain an enemy within its dark recess ; but, at last, the friendly hut of the hospitable savage receives him ; he is warmed and fed, he forgets his former toils and dangers.

And thus it was with me ; an unknown land was extended before me, which it was necessary I should explore. My mind had been impressed with notions of the variety of adversaries that I had to dread : this was not mere conjecture : but I set out, miserable as I was, upon my journey, not without some gleam of hope, and it was fulfilled beyond the measure of my expectation. I gained a pleasant bank ; there I made the form which I have before described, and dwelt unmolested

ed and unobserved, until I had attained the perfection of my vigor.

But the mere loss of my parent was not the only evil which oppressed me; in a short time she would have sent me abroad to shift for myself, as soon as she had enabled me to support my independence: as it was, I had learned but half my lesson, and my instructor was gone; what I had gained had not been followed up, and was too apt to be perverted by the incorrectness of my judgment, and the ignorance of my years: but the little bark can outlive the fury of the tempest, remaining unhurt amid the yawning waves; and the same providence protects the defenceless hare, surrounded on all sides by the most voracious enemies.

CHAP. VI.

His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed,
To work the woe of any living thing.

BEATTIE.

ONE day as my eyes were intent upon the out-stretched heath, I discovered two persons loitering along languidly in the heat of noon-tide: I had ample leisure to observe them as they advanced: they were both young, but from their actions appeared to possess characters entirely distinct: the one who seemed to be the oldest, was intent upon the wild-flowers that grew in abundance among the short grass, plucking here and there a blue-bell or a heath, and examining them with minute attention; whilst he often turned to contemplate the prospect: the other threw stones at the sheep,
or

or stretched himself upon the ground while he tore up grass by the roots, and scattered it wantonly about him; then when his companion had considerably gained the start of him, arose and ran after him, often calling aloud to him to stop till he should come up:—they gradually drew nearer and nearer to the spot where I sat: the elder observed a beautiful rose which grew out of the hedge not far from me: he stepped forward stretching out his hand to pluck, and add it to the collection he had already made: I trembled, but did not dare to stir: he looked for plants along the bottom of the hedge, and he presently cast his eyes upon me, while I affecting not to observe him, remained as before; he was intent upon me when the other came up. “What are you considering so attentively?” said the younger.

“I will

"I will shew you if you will promise to let it alone."

"Very well; very well; what is it? let me see it."

"Look there then, at the foot of that elm, do you not see something?"

"I see the root peeping up among some dry grass, and there is something that looks like a large clod."

"That is a hare: observe how cautiously she sits with her head between her fore feet, and her long ears close upon her grey back."

"Well, I never should have found out that, if you had not shewn it me. I was never any hand at finding out a hare in her form; I wish I had not left my gun behind me in the corner of the hall; if it were not too far, and I did not think she would be gone by the time I returned, I would go back and fetch it."

"Oh! for shame! I thought you promised to let it alone, you cannot

go from your promise." "Ah! but when I said that, I did not know what it was; I did not know it was a hare or I would not have said so; besides, all that I *did* say was, 'very well,' and that, you know, is nothing at all."

"Fie upon such equivocation! if I had known this I would never have pointed it out to you; cannot you take sufficient pleasure in beholding heaven's creatures, all beautiful as they are, without desiring to disturb their tranquility, or destroy that beauty?"

"I cannot say that I see any particular beauty in a hare: I only wish that Rover was here, I would shew you such sport as you never saw in your life."

"Why, you would not wish to worry this inoffensive animal."

"Inoffensive? Yes, it is stupid enough in its appearance: I will have
a fling

a fling at it, that I am determined." At these words he ran to pick up a stone lying upon the grass at some distance : mean time his companion who seemed to perceive the inefficacy of direct opposition, gently approached and threw at me the rose which he had just plucked : it pitched lightly upon me ; I darted forward, and was soon out of sight both of my pursuer and defender.

I made my way through a hurdle into a neighbouring field : they both pursued me with very different motives, the one to exercise his wanton tyranny, the other to rescue me from an unwarrantable attack : I might be said to be attended by a good and an evil genius : the former perpetually endeavouring to counteract the malicious designs of the latter. Having crept through, I stopped short and lay still in a furrow, where I knew I could not be
seen

seen, and that being the case, that the pursuit would immediately cease.

CHAP. VII.

——— Oh! 'tis excellent
To have a giant's strength ;—but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

SHAKESPEARE.

THEY both reached the hurdle breathless ; they looked anxiously over it, but I was gone. “ Well I will match you for this,” (said the younger, throwing away the stone with disappointment), “ I saw what you did, sir, and what you had no business to do.”

“ I am heartily glad (replied the other), that the animal has escaped, and that you have been prevented from committing an unjustifiable action.”

tion.” “How unjustifiable?—Supposing even that I had killed it, had not I a right to do it if I chose?”

“Pray be so good to recollect that a power is not a right: and so you did not actually think of killing it, but you would have cast the stone at it, not with this design, but that of suffering it to take the chance of its being maimed for life, merely to indulge a momentary gratification? I cannot imagine that you intended to stone it merely for the sake of seeing it exercise its legs, for the rose (as you saw) was sufficient to produce that effect.”

The younger whistled and turned his head another way.

“However, I will suppose that you did really intend to destroy this animal, which, bad as it is, is yet the best construction of which your purpose will admit; this will not bear you out; your action was wanton: you had

had no business to employ your power except in a case of urgent necessity. You have a power, it is true, but you are accountable for the abuse of it ; your father has a power of chastising you ; but if he were to exercise it whenever you fell in his way, how should you like his conduct ?”

“ Come, let us go, we shall else be too late.”

“ I will presently : but I beseech you, my dear Thomas, to think somewhat more seriously upon the subject : do not suffer yourself to be deluded by the false notion that “ might is right :” the wretch who bears the knife and kneels upon the bosom of a trembling fellow-creature, whom he is about to stab, may plead the same excuse. You have made a great mistake ; if you wanted food and this animal came in your way, the deity does not forbid

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you

you to destroy it; but then it must be done in the most merciful manner that is possible to be devised; and when a creature may be killed by a slight blow, I cannot deem those persons defensible, who worry it, till it dies in despair."

"And so, I suppose, you will pretend to oppose hunting?"

"Certainly; to torture an animal to death, when a single stroke would put an end to his existence, is indeed a barbarous pursuit, unworthy of enlightened minds: necessity, and the impossibility of destroying game in any other way, could alone give it some colouring of justice. With respect to our conduct towards the beings over which we are placed, if we are compelled to put them out of our way, "a necessary act incurs no blame."

Not so, when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
Disturb's th' economy of nature's realm.
Who, when she form'd design'd them an abode,
The sum is this.—If man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish their's,
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first
Who in his sov'reign wisdom made them all*.

* COWPER.

CHAP. VIII.

Where, alas !
Is innocence secure ?

SOMERVILLE.

MY trepidation was extreme at the idea of the ferocity which the youth had displayed to me, all harmless, and as I had hitherto thought, all unprotected. The conduct I had lately witnessed astonished me : man was in one instance more brutal, in another instance more benevolent than I had ever supposed ; and if I had more to fear, I had also more to hope : had it not been for the contrast, I had not learned to what extent the cruel and humane disposition can reign in the breast of man. Upon the whole I gained comfort, and my knowledge was attained without much suffering.

I now

I now conceived that it would be highly dangerous for me to continue in the same form : I had every thing to dread from the disappointment of the young man ; he had been guilty of duplicity within my hearing, and was I to blame if I reposed no confidence in so perfidious a character ?

Equivocation is highly dangerous. Truth is a beam in this night of error, that does not shine in vain ; the other is a mockery of that beam, an *ignis fatuus*, that leads astray to peril—to destruction.

My first care was to secure a second retreat ; although I was attached to my old habitation, which had so long protected me. I had abundant choice : I might retire to the wood, or enter into the thick furze ; and what forbid me still to remain beneath the shelter of my favorite hedge ? Other spots upon the same bank might be chosen, where

nothing but the most obstinate curiosity could observe my lurking place : a hundred persons may pass by the spot where a hare sits, may almost tread upon it, yet it will remain unseen ; so various are the eyes with which men walk forth : one perhaps, is the slave of interest ; he takes his walk, he looks at nature, it is true, but with eyes of interest : if he survey a beautiful scene, he instantly turns his thoughts ; he thinks not of its beauty, but the advantages to which it may be turned ; and, where he beholds flowery meads and lofty trees, what is he musing upon ?—the felling of timber, and the produce and management of each acre. No wonder that he observes me not : his imagination is elsewhere.—Another walks forth with heavy steps to his labour, his thoughts run upon the toil of the day ; and no wonder that he ob-
serves

serves me not. Another walks forth with eye intent upon the earth, and arms folded across his breast; he is a lover, his eyes are intent upon nature, but the beauty of his mistress is the subject of his contemplation; no wonder that he observes me not, his thoughts are elsewhere. But there is one who walks forth in the fields and the flowers, who searches the hedge-rows and the thickets, with as much attention as the botanist—he is the sportsman; the beauties of the scene must strike his sight, but they make no impression upon his heart; for we are the objects to which his attention is directed; he walks in the midst of goodness, and mercy teeming around him in all the works of the deity, but what is the purpose of his heart? to drive from its retreat, and sacrifice to his wanton cruelty one of the most harmless—the most defenceless of creatures.

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creatures. Ah ! why should the all-powerful eye of man, that eye which can beam with benevolence or melt with sympathy, can glisten to encourage modest virtue, or scowl terrific upon shivering guilt ? why should that eye be prostituted ? what pity that it should ever turn its cool glance upon suffering worth, or contemplate with steady indifference innocence in agony, in distress !—that instead of looking to admire, it should look to destroy !

However, I lost no time in hastening my removal :—I was determined not to quit my bank. I felt that I loved it as a friend, which in the hour of danger and distress had received and sheltered an unprotected orphan from the merciless assaults of the world.

CHAP. IX.

He was, indeed, to me, as my good angel,
To guard me from all dangers.

MASSINGER.

I CERTAINLY was in the right when I formed the resolution of retiring: the distance of a stone's throw afforded me as much security as I could desire, and in all probability preserved my life. I justly conceived that my safety was more menaced than ever, nor did I long remain in a state of uncertainty.

The next morning I saw the elder youth advancing with all possible haste to the place where I had been wont to sit, and whence he had the day before disturbed me. I was puzzled to account for this conduct, for I could not permit myself to suppose that he intended to disturb my quiet

again, unless some urgency demanded such a measure. He peeped under the tree, as soon as he came in sight of it, endeavouring to discover me; and when he observed that I was fled, a mixture of joy and fear alternate was diffused over his features.

He retired cautiously, and with as much haste as he came; but was not quick enough to elude the observance of the younger, who was quickly advancing along the top of the bank, with a gun ready cocked, and all the address of an ambuscader. He started at the sight of the other, and turned pale; but he continued his prying course until he came in sight of my form; his conjectures were verified; he beheld the long grass pressed down at the sides, but I was gone: a sudden burst of passion exhibited itself, he bit his lips, and stamped upon the ground.

The

The elder then stopped, and advanced towards him—"what is the matter? said he.

"Nothing at all; or, supposing any thing should be the matter, I do not conceive myself obliged to tell you."

"I do not wish or affect to have any authority over you in this respect, I thought you seemed to be in pain, and I was anxious to know whether this was really the case, for then it might have been in my power to have relieved you: at any rate I expected you would have answered with civility a question which was intended in kindness."

"I know nothing about your kindness, nor do I think it worth while to take much trouble about it:—I know that there are some persons who, whether they have any business or not, are always intermeddling with the affairs of others."

"This

“ This is very true : but why do you frown ? Have you met with any one this morning who has done you an injury ? You look at me in a way which almost makes me fancy that you have levelled your last remark at me ; and yet I should be sorry to suppose that it was so. Tell me, has any body done you an injury ? ”

“ Yes, some one has.”

“ Who is it ? I am extremely sorry for it ; can I help you to redress it ? who is it ? ”

“ Yourself, Sir.”

“ How can I have offended you this morning ? I cannot recollect doing any thing, except asking you how you did, just before I set out for my walk—could that offend you ? ”

“ I do not care ; I am determined to shoot that hare in spite of you.”

“ What

“What hare do you mean? I have seen none since yesterday.”

“Well I always thought you spiteful enough, but never conceived you would have been so mean as to have told a falsehood upon so foolish an occasion. Now you will pretend to tell me that you have not driven away that hare as you did yesterday: no, I would not believe you if you were to swear it.”

“I hold swearing in too great veneration to sport with it in such a trifling manner: if I have said that I have not seen it, my assertion is to me as sacred as though I had attested it in ten thousand courts of judicature; and as to being guilty of a falsehood, no occasion, whether foolish or serious, will justify my conduct in that respect.”

“You may say what you please, but I will not believe it, and if—

Here appeared to be so much obstinate

stinate malice in these assertions, that I dreaded to what lengths the ungovernable temper of disappointed rage might proceed. I felt for my protector, and was resolved to shew my gratitude for the kindness he had already bestowed, and for that which he evidently intended to have exercised towards me. The purest intentions that ever emanated from the benevolent breast, have been baleful in their consequences, and apparently unproductive of the excellent result which they were intended to effect. No sooner have they commenced their career, than up-starts some left-handed circumstance to thwart them into seeming evil : but the truth is, that creatures are short-sighted, while the Deity has an eye that takes in at once the whole horizon ; that views causes and consequences, and in whose hands is the balance. It is our's to plan,

plan, but the disposal is not in our power, and we should humbly bow to the will of heaven, let good or ill betide us.

With the purpose, therefore, of preventing any future altercation, I rushed forth, determined to expose myself to injury, rather than that obstinacy should retire unconvinced of its error, or that rage should usurp the empire over reason. "There" said my defender, "will you be convinced now—yonder goes the object of your pursuit, and I am glad to see that it is completely out of your reach."

Now I might have very easily withdrawn unperceived, but I made a rustling on purpose to be observed. "Where, where," said the other, turning short about, "we shall see whether she is out of gunshot." He turned in haste, his gun was cocked, it went off in his hand.

My

My heart was torn with anguish when I beheld my champion start, his arm immediately drooping at his side: the author of the mischief stood thunderstruck, his eyes rivetted to the ground, whilst the other, binding up his arm with his handkerchief, immediately retired.

CHAP. X.

My thoughts shall fix, my latest wish depend
On thee.

PRIOR.

I WAS too much interested for my benefactor not to feel a more than ordinary share of anguish upon this unfortunate event: I considered myself as the author of the mischief, but it was a consolation to me that I was guiltless of any evil intention,
and

and when I reflected upon the motives by which my conduct was governed, I felt no cause for reproach. I wished much to see my wounded friend once more strolling near my haunts, that I might ascertain whether he had really received such an injury, as precluded him from the enjoyment of stirring abroad, and re-visiting scenes in which he had, apparently, received so much pure satisfaction. My expectations were disappointed: the evening came, and the morning came; another and another still succeeded; and my anxieties were unremoved; he was not to be beheld upon the heath culling sweet flowers, and

Brushing with easy steps the dew away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

My reader may imagine that he was, perhaps, at this time languishing on a bed of sickness, his friends
and

and parents weeping around ; perhaps already laid in the cold, cold grave, while all were lamenting the premature extinction of those virtues, and that genius, which might have aroused a people's admiration, and swelled its fame. For my own part, I can affirm, that my state of suspense was by no means enviable, and I desired to be convinced of the truth. Already I mourned the loss of exemplary benevolence, and the first friend I had ever known among all the human race. I had caught a glimpse of goodness, and the picture had charmed me ; but no sooner was it presented, than it was hurried away from my sight. Imagination represented him as perishing, or bearing about him a wound that might embitter the cup of life : how were my fears and my uncertainty to be removed ? The information which I anxiously expected
was

was denied me: he never more appeared to ease me of my apprehensions, and release my aching bosom from its oppression.

But while I was absorbed in these melancholy reflections, a sense of my immediate danger, roused me from the contemplation of the disasters of another. My utmost vigilance soon became doubly necessary to preserve me from continual assaults, which fell so thick upon me, that my life was rendered more miserable than it had ever been before. Misfortune soon hemmed me in on every side.

Despairing of beholding my benefactor again, I removed myself totally from the fatal heath, where I no longer expected to remain secure. Now on all sides the yellow harvest waved, and the reaper carried his sickle to the field. I knew that the winter of the year must quickly
come

come, and therefore was determined to provide against it as well as was in my power. With this reflection I sought a new hiding-place, and I fixed upon one, as I thought, of no common security. Adjoining to a thick wood stood a large barn, apparently long since disused, where the briar and the nettle grew abundantly around. Between this building and the hedge I lay concealed, and congratulated myself upon the advantages of my situation; but I had not been long here, before my quiet was disturbed; I was found out by enemies equally as implacable as men or dogs, but not cruel as the former, because impelled by the imperious demands of hunger and necessity, and merely obeying the call of self-preservation. The fox discovered my retreat, and used all his craftiness to destroy me; the voracious weasel thirsted to suck my blood; the

the pole-cat, and all the vermin of the field were bent upon my destruction. I soon found out that I was thus exposed to the attacks of animals much inferior to myself in size, but to which I entertained a most invincible aversion. I lamented my hard fate, that I had no sooner chosen a place of retreat but I was forced to abandon it; I thought the whole brute creation seemed to be in league against my life; I envied the condition of the feathered race: oh! happy birds, said I within myself, oh! that I had the wings of a bird!

Surely, of all the animals that dwell beneath the face of heaven, a hare is the most persecuted, and I am the most persecuted among hares.

End of Book the First.

the pole-cat, and all the venom of
the hell were bent upon my defence.
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sidered the condition of the feathered
race: oh! happy birds, said I with
in myself, that I had the wings

of a bird, of all the animals that
inhabit the land of beasts,
there is the most persecuted,
I am the most persecuted animal.

End of Book the first.

THE HARE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

==

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare.

THOMSON.

==

THE HARE

BOOK THE SECOND.

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CHAP. XI.

Who can forbear to smile with nature ? Can
 The stormy passions in the bosom roll,
 While every gale is peace, and every grove
 Is melody ?

THOMSON.

THERE is a satisfaction about autumn that far surpasses the raptures of spring or the expectations of summer. It is the evening of the year, when the contemplative mind receives a tranquil delight from the impression of the abundant beauty and fertility that beams around. The green liveries of spring are pleasurable ; the winter is just overpast, and vegetation revives anew ; the blade springs delicate, and the the bud shoots tenderly : pleasurable are the bright days of summer ; they announce that the fruits of the earth are advancing to their maturity :

ty : but far more pleasurable still are the luxuriant days of autumn ; the sight and the palate are then variously gratified with a delicious profusion : nature displays a picture of the richest colours and most transcendent harmonies, she spreads a table of the choicest luxuries : the heart of man is gladdened : he casts his eyes around, and lo ! the fruits of his labours are poured abroad ; the corn gracefully bends its waving stalks ; its ears are pointed towards the earth, as though they would return the grains once more into its prolific bosom, unless prevented by the sickle, and they admonish the reaper that his hour is arrived. The clustering grape and the twining hop invite the hand of the gatherer ; and the luscious apple is seen from afar upon the bending bough. Behold the reward of his toils, the consummation of his hopes and wishes ;

this

this prospect of plenty should expand his heart with univereal benevolence, and teach him to render others partakers of the blessings which he most abundantly enjoys. As far as his power extends, every thing should share his feelings, and exult with him in the possession of peace and plenty ; but no, his emotions are often transient ; pride, passion, or interest, step in, and the door that was opened is closed again. However, if he could not be possibly bounteous, he might possess the virtue in a negative degree ; he might at least, leave the native tenants of the field unmolested, and not disturb the economy of gentle nature's reign. Observe what he does: at this season, particularly, he lets his fury lose upon them ; like a tyrant glutted at a full banquet, he issues orders for the slaughter of an
E 2 innocent

innocent multitude, and exults to join in the massacre and contribute his share; all his wants are amply gratified; this abundance gives him indolence, this indolence induces cruelty. In this, he is chiefly his own enemy; he changes serenity for tumult, and the wife will not envy him his change.

I appeal to the feeling heart which kindles at the contemplation of natural beauties, and experiences within that harmony and delight which it beholds without, to whom it is no joy.

This falsely-cheerful barbarous game of death! Surely the lovers of such savage pastimes must be, in a great measure, insensible to the charms of creation: they may affect to feel them; but, if they did in reality, the influence would be such as must estrange them from barbarity, for they benignantly inspire serenity and composure,

composure, not agitation and ferocity ; or, the hermit would never retire from the busy world to the most sequestered spot, if he did not hope to find there that quiet which the croud denies, and enjoy, without intrusion, his maple dish and homely fare ; his devotions undisturbed ; his passions subdued by religious contemplations and a holy calm. But, it should seem as if man, unsatisfied with the uproar and confusion of the populous city, where the violence of passions “ lords it wide,” were envious of the serenity of rural scenes, and must needs be ambitious of disturbing the quiet of the groves and woods. If he visit the country with these intentions, at the same time that he professes to enjoy it, he deceives himself, and acts injuriously towards it ; and if all the game that the brakes and fields produce were to be destroyed, the one half

of those who profess a taste for the charms of nature, would discover their error. These do but transfer the turbulence of their spirits from the croud to the retirement ; and, when they are wearied of engaging in conflict with their fellow creatures, they turn the tide of their ferocity upon the brute creation. They ransack earth, air, and water for their victims ; and when they have immolated them, they call it sport, He who would acquire a knowledge of true rural pleasures, should adopt the advice of the poet :—

Would you then taste the tranquil scene ?
Before your bosoms be serene ;
Devoid of hate, devoid of strife,
Devoid of all that poisons life :
And much it 'vails you, in their place,
To graft the love of human race.

SHENSTONE.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Avaunt, away ! the cruel sway,
 Tyrannic man's dominion ;
 The sportsman's joy, the murd ring cry,
 The flutt'ring gory pinion.

BURNS.

DRIVEN from haunt to haunt, I knew no place of rest, and thought myself the most miserable creature in existence. I now took shelter upon a woody declivity, where the axe had not for an age disturbed the silence of the spot, or laid low the leafy honours of the spreading beech and knotted oak : these overcanopied my head, and tangled underwood protected all the avenues to my recess. The foliage, changing its sober green for tints the most luxuriant, announced that, ere long, the shade would be thinned.

One

One morning I heard guns resound from various parts of the country and could not imagine the cause. From the traits which I had occasion to discover in the disposition of man, I thought it not improbable that there might be two contending parties mutually incensed, and at war with each other. However, if possible, I resolved to discover the source of this disturbance, although I was determined, at the same time not to hazard much in the enquiry. If men were contending with men, they would hardly turn aside to molest me; I should be an object beneath their notice; yet I was bent upon caution. I, therefore, stole gently upwards to a grassy mound, which peeped above the tops of the trees, and from the brow of which I had a survey of a most extensive country. There I posted myself, and, like a vigilant centinel

was

was eager to observe the motions of my enemy. The noises still continued at intervals, sometimes resounding from a great distance, where it would be impossible for the eye to discern any thing distinctly: at other times nearer; but the explosion was generally single, or rarely more than two following each other in rapid succession: sometimes, just at the moment before the explosion, I fancied that I saw a flash, and immediately afterwards, smoke arising from some of the fields below, and discerned here and there, men crossing the fields in an oblique direction. I fancied also that they were attended by dogs, and this increased my alarm. At length in a stubble, immediately below the wood, I saw two large dogs bound over the fence, which were presently followed by two men, each with a gun in his hand. I feared to return to my

form, and yet I feared to stay ; at last, however, I adopted the former expedient, because I conceived that I should be less exposed in case they should advance into the wood : my heart fluttered as I descended, but I descended in safety.

Scarcely had I secured my retreat, when I plainly heard the men speak to each other, and “ To ho” was pronounced with such a lengthened, hollow tone, as threw me again into a tremor : I almost doubted whether I was not the object of research, and yet I knew not well how that could be ; but I was ignorant how far the power of those awful beings, men and dogs, extended, and therefore my suspense was awful. In an instant I was released ; both guns were let off, and I remained unhurt. I heard the flutter of many wings above my head, and looking up, I beheld a covey of partridges, who wheeled

wheeled off, and passed away without crossing the wood: but one poor bird unable to keep up with the rest of his companions, screaming piteously, flew faintly to the ground, and hid itself upon the bank, close at my side. The sportsmen, I suppose, did not observe it had dropped, for they immediately departed, as I imagined, in pursuit of the numerous part of the covey, which had flown into the vale. Thus they relieved me from anxiety upon my own account; but they had presented a shocking spectacle to my eyes. If sportsmen knew the agonies of a wounded bird, left to pine and to perish alone, those in whom the feelings of humanity are not entirely obliterated, would hesitate upon the propriety of drawing a trigger. They intend it is true to take the life; but instead of this they often maim, and the bird escapes, wherefore

fore they should not venture upon so hazardous a condition. I beheld the poor creature mangled and bleeding, and rolling itself upon the ground in excess of agony, or sitting disconsolate, with its head tucked under its drooping wing. I heard its mournful cries, and beheld its distress without being able to relieve its anguish. I would have retired, but for the fear of being myself overtaken by a like calamity. I was, therefore, obliged to witness misery, which rent my heart ; but the pangs of which I could not alleviate. Till now, I had not known that these birds were equally the objects of persecution with ourselves ; and much did I marvel, that man, who seemed a being of such power and wisdom, should stoop to such acts of cruelty, and condescend to become such an executioner ; but I was taught a lesson of content, and learned to think
myself,

myself, for the future, by no means
the most miserable of all creatures.

CHAP. XIII.

The roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous-dissonance.

MILTON.

HEAVILY the hours passed untill dusk relieved me at least from sights and sounds of woe: with the lengthening shadows I went forth to seek my usual subsistence, and when I returned I found that the afflicted bird was no more.

The sounds which had annoyed me so much on the preceding day were renewed the next morning with the light, and my apprehensions were perpetually kept awake for my own safety; the neighbourhood of these
F birds

birds was by no means favourable; where they had been once discovered, thither their persecutors would certainly return, and my only security was to retire to a steeper part of the declivity, where the wood was more impervious. This I easily accomplished; and although I could not prevent these noises from assaulting my ears, yet I was more at ease with regard to personal safety.—From day to day the same war was continued with the utmost vigour, as though the object of it had been nothing less than the utter extermination of all the feathered tribes; and I learned one evening from an experienced hare, whom I met with by chance, that the season for shooting had just commenced: at the same time he also warned me, that as cruel an attack would shortly be made upon all our race, as soon as the corn should

should be completely secured within the barns : he added many cautionary hints with respect to myself, which he had acquired by long observation, having been himself several times hunted, but having had the good fortune to escape unhurt. I heard his remarks with attention, and promised to observe them, but still thought that they would not be so necessary to me, whose speed and strength might match with the most vigorous of our species. Hitherto I had very little idea of the sagacity of dogs, and of their wonderful powers of scenting ; or, if I had been acquainted with these to their full extent, I should have learned to think more humbly of myself, before sad experience came to check my pride.

The day was misty and the sun had not yet penetrated the heavy vapours which hovered over the earth : I was roused from slumber by the

found of a horn echoing from far over the opposite hills; again it sounded, and the gale wafted it stronger to my attentive ears. I started to my post of observation, I could see nothing; the haze was driven before the wind, and a drizzling rain descended. Presently I heard through the woods, the cries of dogs sounding from different quarters; this had not lasted long, when, on a sudden, a multitude of them raised their various tones all at once, and the shouts of men were added to swell the dreadful tumult. I guessed the cause, and lamented the fate of the unhappy sufferer, whom they followed apparently with unremitting ardor: "all the savage soul of game was up;" and now I could faintly discern dogs, horses and men straining up a steep thicket, and then rushing over a wide heath with the utmost fury; they glanced along
with

with such velocity that they were soon out of sight and hearing ; and, indeed, the heaviness of the air was favourable to neither. And now I thought that, perhaps, having overtaken the unfortunate, they were tearing it quivering limb from limb, and pouring its blood upon the ground, as a libation to their insatiate cruelty ; from this consideration, I began to reflect upon my own state ; I think that my turn may come next, and that it behoves me to be prepared to meet the calamity with resolution. Bewildered in a maze of opinions, at one moment adopting one plan, at the next rejecting it—I started again. Sure it is not an illusion : the sound returns, by degrees it grows louder and louder ; men, horses and dogs appear retracing the heath they had so lately crossed ; they rush again down the thicket, and I lose sight

of them in the woodlands: the echoes of the neighbouring hills return the horrid din, and the woods themselves resound like a vaulted chamber.—Horror seized my trembling limbs: I shuddered at the approaching fate of the victim: but, suddenly, the sound ceased; a dreadful pause ensued, like the silence that prevails between the boisterous gusts of the tempest:—now, surely they are murdering—no—the tumult is resumed, but not so universally;—hark, the voices of men animating their fellow-labourers to the bloody work;—hark! they ply the thong, they blow the horn: but the cry of the dogs is weakened; one by one they send forth their notes; by degrees they die away, and are heard only at long intervals. The sun now burst through the clouds, and his fervid beams drank up the morning rain; mid-day was passed; I heard the
bugle

bugle again ; the cover was quitted ; I saw the spotted pack summoned and conducted homeward. The train slowly returned over the uplands with languid pace, as though fatigued with the exertions of the day ; but whether they retired satiated, or disappointed, I could not ascertain.

For a few hours longer I was certainly secure from them, and I resolved to employ part of these in gratifying my curiosity, and discovering what I could of the ravages of this mock warfare.

CHAP. XIV.

O pity 'twere that hearts which knew no guile
Should ever feel the pangs of ruth or wrong.

BOWLES.

TWILIGHT streaked the west,
and a few stars appeared upon the
brow of modest evening, faintly
twinkling before I ventured to sally
forth. At the hour when the vir-
tuous among men sit down to rest
in the bosom of their families
from the toils of the day, and to en-
joy what they have dearly earned by
the sweat of their brow; at this
hour of composure it is our delight
to roam in quest of sustenance, with-
out intruding upon the concerns of
others: nor is the first beam of
morning less our own; before the
village hind has shaken off sleep, or
driven his team a field, we satisfy
the

the demands of nature; and no sooner does he appear than we retire. So uninterfering are we, that when he is at home we are abroad; when he is abroad we are then at home. Yet how strange! that a being so harmless and unobtrusive in its nature, should be so eagerly attacked and harassed from its quiet: we only ask to be left at ease, to remain unobserved as we are unobserving, and even this privilege is refused us. We must be dragged from our retreat, and exposed to every species of outrage. But thus it is with human nature, that those things which most retire from observation, are most sought after and desired.—The diamond which is obtained with excessive difficulty is held in the highest estimation, and hewn from the mine in the bowels of the earth to glitter in the diadem. The pearl is dragged up from the

bottom of the sea that leaves the coast of Coromandel : hid beneath the rolling waves, and buried within the tenacious shell of a fish, the fearless diver descends to its bed at the hazard of his life, and tearing it thence, bears away his prize to the shore.

Those * who delight in our torments, state the superlative advantages which we enjoy whose legs are so fleet, and whose arts of preservati-

* A book has been written to shew the variety of means which man has invented for the destruction of our species. Whether the author, from compunction or not, it cannot be supposed that I am acquainted with ; but he suppressed the sale for near a dozen years, and the sportsman was universally disappointed. An unlucky wight of a bookseller, supposing he might reap some advantage, and gratify the destroyers of our peace, published a splendid edition of the work, which gained universal approbation : but, no sooner did its author hear of the advantage likely to be derived by this *man of words*, than he instituted a suit in chancery against him, which was carried on by him, or his coadjutors, with as much avidity as he would have done the chace of a *poor forlorn hare*.

en are so numerous ; and, though we cannot openly defend ourselves by force, that our craft supplies the place of arms. Now, if our case be impartially taken into consideration, it will appear that we are one of the least secure of all those animals which are pursued either for pleasure or upon the score of necessity. If the more ferocious beast be roused from its lair, after it has fled until it can fly no farther, it turns in its own defence, and employs its fangs and talons against its pursuers ; the lion, in the desert of Africa, struggles against the Moorish huntsman ; and the tiger in the luxuriant plains of India, faces about against its princely destroyer, and, in despair, attacks the elephant upon which he is mounted : the wild boar and the wolf die not unrevenged, and when they are overtaken

taken in the chace: many a dog falls a victim to their expiring rage: the stag stands at bay; the wily fox is pursued to its earth: the otter grapples, with the strongest hound, amid the turbid streams, and dies in defence of his native haunts: the hare surely is, after all, the most defenceless, and has only its speed and sagacity to preserve it, qualifications which, when they are balanced against the strength and sagacity of the hound, will not appear to be of that importance which we may at first imagine. The hare starts away, and is out of sight almost immediately.— But there exists a breed of dogs (the greyhound) that can overtake it in its swiftest moments; and the patient beagle follows it with invincible assiduity, treading its mazy doubles over lawn and through thicket, until

til he wearies it out : its sagacity is vaunted ; those, however, who have beheld the chase, know that the hound is as sagacious in following as the other is in escaping.—Where, then, are the pre-eminent advantages which the hare enjoys ?

CHAP. XV.

Then down the lawns I ran—
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
 Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place.
 MILTON.

BENDING my course to the low-lands, I strolled through the plains which had so lately been a part of the theatre of the ravages I had beheld. The print of the hoofs of horses and the feet of dogs were visible upon the moist earth, and the fences were here and there destroyed and torn up by the despoilers : gates were thrown wide, and banks broken down : confusion and disorder were introduced to mar the industry of the farmer, who would have cause “ to rue the hunting of that day ” when he should survey his clover trodden down

down just as it was springing up, and his hedges broken ; and when he should reflect that the diligence of a week could hardly atone for the idleness of an hour. Following the course of the brook which flowed in the bottom, and which I observed had in several places been crossed, I arrived at a gate leading into a stubble ; through which I had no sooner crept, than I heard at a little distance something gently moving across the path-way : I immediately took alarm, but flight was unnecessary ; and how shall I describe my emotions when the miserable object whose sufferings I had lamented, and whose fate I had prematurely deplored, appeared before me. I had mourned its death, but it was still alive, although it had been driven to the very brink of despair and destruction : its fur was all dabbled in blood, and rough with the night dew

dew and the water of the stream. It seemed like a mournful ghost rising before my astonished sight : part of its shoulder had been lacerated, and it limped heavily along.

I approached to condole with it, and offer all the assistance that lay within the compass of my limited powers. It informed me that it had that morning experienced a most miraculous escape from the hounds ; for that at starting it was seized by one of the pack, whose teeth had severely torn it upon its shoulder : labouring under such a disadvantage in the outset, that it was then driven about until all its strength and spirit failed ; that at length, just as it was upon the point of resigning itself to its merciless pursuers, by an effort it plunged into the brook as a last resource ; then swimming to the middle of it, there lay concealed among some rushes in a hole of the stream,

stream, with only its mouth and nostrils just sufficiently above the water to prevent it from being suffocated : that after some time spent in fruitless research, the sportsmen had retired, declaring at their departure that they would return to the spot upon some future day.

The hare bore its calamity with the greatest resignation, and added a remark, which immediately excited my curiosity and astonishment—to this stream, it observed, that it had owed the greatest misfortune of its life ; but that it had also been indebted to it for the preservation of that life, and that the late benefit had made some amends for the former injury : during the floods of winter this stream had swept away its helpless infant charge, and they had all perished in the torrent, but the mother had at length been recompensed, by its affording her an
afylum

afylum from the fury of her murderers.

During the whole of the narration I had surveyed the stranger with the deepest attention, and though disfigured with mire, and deformed by a wound, I recognized my mother! Of my feelings upon this occasion I shall say nothing: there are those among mankind who laugh at feelings, and the rest need not to be wrought up into sympathy by a long discussion; their breasts will do me justice, and to their imagination I submit the sensations I experienced when we became known to each other. I had bewailed her misfortune as a stranger, but I was spared the agony of knowing that my own parent was the unfortunate sufferer, at the time when I beheld the persecution from a distant height,

She was eager to know how I had been preserved, unprotected as I was

at

at so tender an age. I related to her the history of my life since we parted, and in return she informed me of her own. Upon the fatal night that separated us, she had in vain attempted to save her offspring, but it was with difficulty that she could preserve her own life: since the loss of us, she remained in a solitary abode, not having experienced any subsequent serious afflictions, for her age and experience gave her advantages which I had not possessed. Her troubles, however, had returned with autumn, since she had been severely coursed a few days before, and with the utmost difficulty escaped the jaws of the greyhounds, by reaching the coppice from which she had this morning been driven by the pack: she thought it unsafe to remain any longer in the open fields, but there was danger even in that retreat which seemed most secure from
from

from harm. How happy was I to be able to make some return for that care which had protected me in my helpless days! I hastened to conduct her to a spot which had hitherto been unmolested by the clang of the whip, or the shout of the huntsman, where she might repose until her wounds were healed and her spirits renewed: I placed her in my form, and constructed another at her side, that I might watch over her with unremitting assiduity, and omit nothing of comfort which it was in my power to bestow.

Here was another lesson, bitter but useful. The discontent which I had so long harboured within my bosom took flight at this mournful example of persecution; and I learned also, from the comparison of our fates, to deem myself most happy, in that, although I had undergone much suffering, I had escaped such
exquisite

exquisite misery. From the firmness with which my mother supported her afflictions, I was taught the value of resignation. The mind that possesses this, can feel a calm amid the jarring of conflicting elements, a sunshine within when the storm rages without ; it is attuned to harmony, not to be disturbed by petty accidents, and can vibrate sweet music, like the harp of Æolus, even in the chilling gale.

CHAP. XVI.

Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder.

COWPER.

FROM day to day I enjoyed the satisfaction of beholding my parent recover beneath my fostering care. At morn and night I collected provender for her, and brought it in my mouth until she was able once more to forage for herself; and now that she had acquired strength to go forth by my side, I led her to the nearest pastures, and shewed her where, with the least trouble, she might seek her own food. Thus the exertions of my duty were crowned with all the success that I could desire, and the pleasure of becoming thus serviceable, repayed me for every

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ry toil, and made me forget every danger.

One evening we separated to our respective pastures: the sun was declining upon the hills, and shot his slanting rays towards the vales, which were beginning to be wrapped in a breadth of shade: the moor-hen sported among the oziers of the lake, and the rook returned slow sailing to his airy nest: I was light of heart, and sported gaily onward to seek fresh pastures and explore the vale: night soon overtook me, delightful as that described by the bard.

“ Night is calm and fair; blue, starry, settled is night. The winds, with the clouds, are gone. They sink behind the hill. The moon is upon the mountain. Trees glisten: streams shine on the rock. Bright rolls the settled lake; bright the stream of the vale. The breezes drive the blue mist slowly over the narrow

narrow vale. It rises on the hill, and joins its head to heaven.—Night is settled, calm, blue, starry, bright, with the moon*.”

Transported with delight, I wandered along among the meadows, indulging my curiosity, and gratifying my palate amid scenery of such resplendent beauty, until I began to think it high time to retrace my steps : but as I was loitering in a stubb'le, through the gleam I faintly discerned some persons at a distance, who appeared to be coming towards me, but so silently did they advance that I hardly heard their tread. I turned to fly from them, for my suspicions were awakened as to the virtue of their designs ; but I saw another also approaching, from the quarter by which I intended to have

* OSSIAN.

retreated,

retreated, and he was gently leading a horse. Thus closed in I remained in my situation, and squeezed myself into a furrow, where I trusted that I should remain unnoticed, and should have an opportunity of slipping away as soon as they had gone by. I was at a loss to account for these silent proceedings which disturbed me : I distinguished the footsteps of the horse crossing the field several times, from hedge to hedge ; and now I could hear low whispers ; presently a covey rushed by me through the stubbles, and I felt a net completely thrown over me.

At the idea of capture and confinement I started away ; yet, alas ! it was but lost labour ; I did but entangle myself the more in my circling prison, and I rolled over and over upon the ground, unable either to extricate myself or to make any use

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of

of my limbs, around which the meshes confusedly twined. My case was hopeless, and I saw with the utmost horror the men run up to relieve me from my present calamity only to plunge me into a greater. In low tones they expressed their satisfaction as to the booty they had gained: one of them quickly brought a bag into which were thrown the unfortunate covey, who to add to the comfort of my situation, were, without the least compunction, strangled one by one in my sight.

Now, indeed, I gave myself up for lost: this specimen of the merciless hands into which I had fallen, deprived me of any ground for the least ray of expectation; and every limb trembled when they proceeded to take me out of the net.

After some difficulty, and much struggling on my part, who dreaded the

the touch of a hand almost as much as I should the sting of a viper, I was firmly secured.

Now, while one of the party held me, a deliberation ensued, the subject of which was, whether it would be best to kill me. No unfortunate prisoner at the mock trial of a massacre, ever awaited the decision of his sanguinary judges with more impatience than I expected my sentence. One of them said, that in all probability they should not take another hare that night, and as he had partly promised to procure one, that I had therefore better be killed: another urged that he had been offered something considerable for the first that he could take alive; and that it was a great chance if another could be caught so well preserved as in the present instance.— The advice of the latter prevailed, and it was resolved, at least for a

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while,

while, to suffer me to remain with life; accordingly I was thrust by myself into a bag, which being tyed at the mouth, and fixed upon the back of the horse, the robbers decamped with their prize.

CHAP. XVII.

Are you a man?

SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER passing through many gates and gaps, I soon found, by the found of the earth, that we had gained the high road. We had not proceeded far before we were joined by another party; and I discovered that these were friends of my conductors, and of the same profession, from a conversation which ensued,
in

in which the boisterous oath and the rude jest were abundantly given and retorted. These said, that after having snared five hares, they were disturbed by the game-keepers ; and, having been closely pursued, had very narrowly escaped from being taken. However, as they had got off with such success, they were determined to carouze at the house upon the heath. In this all the others very readily concurring, we presently halted ; the horse was tied up to some pales ; and the whole company retired into the house, as I imagine, for a door was opened and closed upon them, and I heard their vociferous mirth from within. Having continued some time in high debate, the subject of which it was impossible, at that distance, for me to distinguish, one of them came out again, and returning to that side of the horse where I was suspended, untied

untied the mouth of my sack ; then to my extreme horror, thrust in upon me the body of a hare newly killed, and yet warm ; and loosing the horse from the pale, where he had stood shivering in the chill of the night, set out upon his journey.

My state, bad as it had been, was yet comfortable before to what I at present experienced. It may be well conceived, that I was not a little shocked and disgusted to feel the weight of a dead body pressing upon me from above ; but it was with much difficulty that I extricated myself from under it ; when having no other resource, I was compelled to seat myself upon it. We moved onward, at a very uneasy pace, for some time, the driver now and then bestowing a few blows and curses upon the patient beast who bore us ; not satisfied, however, with his speed,

speed, and apparently eager to hasten home, he mounted, and, notwithstanding the additional burthen, urged the horse as fast as he could move. If, for a few minutes, he relaxed his pace to gain breath, oaths, stripes, and kicks were again lavished upon him, until his utmost efforts were renewed. If I had required a proof of the disposition of my possessor, and had previously gained no other, these actions had stamped his character at once. "A good man is merciful unto his beast;" but how was it in the present case? My dread increased; and I anxiously desired once more to behold the light of day; whether I was then doomed to regain my liberty, or to lose my life.

What wretch, half stifled and confined as I was, under such aggravating circumstances, would not wish for emancipation, even though
he

he should be in danger of death by the exchange?—The tortures practised by some tyrants, as the history of mankind relates, were scarcely worse ; they tied a living and a dead body together, until, by a lingering process, the living became as the body to which it was attached.—Such, for a time, was my wretched state, and how could I know but that death might overtake me before I should be released ?

We stopped again : I could not ascertain whether the sun was high ; but conjectured, that it must be morning by the faint light that was just discernible through the interstices of my prison. The man dismounted ; I was taken from off the horse and conveyd into a house, where the sacks were thrown promiscuously into a corner. Now, indeed, I had, for the first time, an opportunity of removing to some distance

tance from the object of my annoyance, and immediately crept away as far as I could. A female voice from above enquired of my possessor where he had staid so long, and why he had remained out all the night? To these questions he scarcely vouchsafe to render any answer, or those that he gave were short and churlish; but presently he said, "I am going out for a little while, and in the mean time, I insist upon it that you will not touch those sacks which I have placed in the corner by the window; if, upon my return, I find that you have meddled with them, I shall be very angry."

"What sacks?" returned the same voice from above, "and what is in them that I may not touch them?" but the words were lost; for, having stated his commands, he was out of hearing.

He

He had not been long absent before another person lifted the latch and tripped slipshod over the threshold ; in a few minutes, some one coming to the corner in which the bags lay, began to examine their contents : first the other, in which were the birds, was opened ; an expression of delighted surprise followed : the mouth of that in which I lay was next loosened ; my heart palpitated with the hopes of escape ; but I lay perfectly still, until I discovered the opening ; then forth I rushed to the great astonishment of a gaping child, who, in vain, attempted to stop my career : a back-door stood open, and I fled out of the house, entering upon a slip of garden, where I concealed myself in a bed of cabbages. The child pursued me with many outcries, calling to its mother to assist in catching me. They both hurried into the garden,
the

the one crying, and the other expressing her dread of the effects of her husband's anger in case I should have completed my escape. However, I was soon discovered to their great satisfaction; and, in a scrambling manner, driven about from one bed to another, they attempting to catch me; and I not only attempting to elude their hands, but to find out some hole in the fence through which I might escape; but I could discern none through which it would have been possible for me to draw my whole body: at last, I drove with all my might against the widest aperture which I could observe, hoping that my force and weight would sufficiently enlarge it to admit me through. In this I was completely disappointed; unable either to pass through or to return, I stuck fast among the briars and was taken. The mother then gently reproving

proving the curiosity of the child, wrapped me in her apron, and they both returned with me into the house. Unfortunately, while they were entering at one door, the father also entered again at the other. —His countenance naturally harsh, now kindled into fury: no sooner did he see me in her hands, than seizing me he thrust me into my old confinement, and without hearing the defence of the woman, beat her most unmercifully, until screaming she fled out of the house; when removing me and the rest of his plunder, he deposited us in some other room, and turned the lock upon us.

Alas! thought I, my opinion was but too well founded: here is, at any rate a consistency of character; cruel as he was to his horse, he is as cruel in other instances also; and the same disposition that prompts a
man

man to behave savagely towards his beast, will render him, whenever opportunity offers, a tyrant in his own family.

CHAP. XVIII.

—— Mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
To deathless pain.

MILTON.

SHUT up within a damp and noisome place, I passed several hours without food, and almost without air. In this deplorable condition, torn as I was a second time from my parent, and excluded from the comforts, and even necessities of existence, I could not much longer have continued to support a life now no more rendered desirable : but the
H calls

calls of hunger would have been more urgent and imperious if my mind had been less oppressed with melancholy reflections, and the fatigue of my exertions demanded repose, and brought on a slumber.— At length the door was opened ; I felt myself lifted from the ground and borne away.

After some time we came within hearing of the hum of men, and seemed to be entering some populous place : for I could discern artificial lights through the texture of my covering ; whereas, before I was completely enveloped in darkness, and the noises of men and horses as we traversed several streets, struck terror into me ; the crack of the whip, and the rattling of wheels distressed me beyond measure ; but the person at whose back I was suspended, entered a house, and enquired if the master were at home. Here,
I fancy,

I fancy, he intended to have disposed of me according to the information that he had given his companions, when my life was the question of debate ; but here his design was frustrated ; for he was answered in the negative, that he had quitted Gloucester that morning, that he was not expected to return in less than a month ; upen this disagreeable intelligence he retired, muttering something between his teeth, and apparently little satisfied with his disappointment. Soon, however, he came to a place where he sold the dead part of his charge, and made a bargain with regard to myself: here I again saw the light, not the light of nature and freedom, but was produced by the poacher in a small low room, where the air was extremely noxious, and where I was examined by the glimmering of
a candle,

a candle, whose dazzling rays I could hardly bear. At the conclusion of a conference in which my seller extolled and my purchaser vilified me, although afterwards neither seemed particularly displeased with the agreement ; I became the property of another ; and being released from the horrid bag, was conveyed into a new prison. Of my situation, I could not immediately form any distinct idea, for it was dark when I was introduced to it, and, in truth, I felt but little inclined to take much trouble in exploring it, although it required no great powers of penetration to discover that my range was not very extensive ; however, finding out a warm corner where hay had been placed to form a bed for me ; there I lay close, and excess of weariness soon brought on a deep sleep.

When

When I awoke, the beams of the morning stuck upon my eye-lids, and gave me an opportunity of discovering where I was placed, and what was the construction of my new habitation ; but how differently did they appear ; not as they were wont ; breaking through the twinkling leaves and bespangling every blade of grass ; but they shot over the roof of a house upon which appeared chimnies streaming soon after with smoke ; no chorus of birds was to be heard caroling to the rising sun, no notes save those of a solitary black-bird, who, confined as well as myself, from a wicker cage suspended to the door-post of a stable, made the walls re-echo to his mournful strains. I was no longer free to choose my food from the variety which nature grants, but in this respect I presently discovered that I

was not in any absolute want : this might be deemed living in luxury when compared with the manner in which I had passed the day before.— I was inclosed within a spacious box wired in front, and therefore much exposed, but having a part at each end entirely covered in, where I could retire, whenever I wished to escape observation : I was abundantly supplied with vegetables, and whatever was necessary for me except my liberty ; and that I panted for and prized above all the comforts that men could possibly bestow.

The place assigned to me was in a yard which belonged to an inn, and my box was fixed against the wall, where several contrivances of the same description above and below me were allotted to rabbits : and here I suffered much from the impertinent curiosity of every idle gazer,
for

for although I retreated to the most obscure part of my hutch, it was in the power of any one by striking upon it forcibly with a stick to teaze me from my hiding place and drive me from one end to the other ; then frequently the indolent ostlers and post-boys, when they were not engaged in the noble pursuit of gaming, amused themselves at my expence ; and one in particular enjoying my distress, used to be highly delighted with puffing a cloud of smoke at me from a short pipe which he held between his teeth.—

Here, also, was an entire inversion of all my habits ; I could scarcely ever sleep during the day, for the perpetual hurry of passing and re-passing, and the noises of bells, which were ever tinkling in my ears. But I collected from a conversation that occurred between some of my spectators,

tors, that I was to be slaughtered at a convenient season, being necessary to add to the delicacies of a sumptuous entertainment, which was to be given in a few days.—Oh! how I hailed the approach of that hour which was to release me from my misery.

One afternoon two young men drove a small chaise most furiously into the yard; the flanks of the horse smoked, and were all dripping from the violence of his exertions. I immediately attracted their notice, and in one of them recollected the features of the youth from whose murderous hands I had been rescued by the interposition of my benefactor, but the other was not he: after remaining some time within the house, they came out half-intoxicated, for their behaviour was then wild and extravagant. They had no sooner re-ascended their carriage,

riage, than one of them accidentally casting his eyes towards me exclaimed, that they had forgot to ask about the hare. The landlord was sent for, and they were not long in agreeing about the purchase of me: I was, therefore, put into a wicker cage, with a little straw, which being tied on at the back of the chaise, we were whirled away.

They drove on with so much violence, that I was apprehensive for the lives of many persons upon the road; and did not, without just grounds, entertain strong suspicions for the whole party. Our course was not exactly so rectilinear as it ought to have been, and we were more than once in danger of being dashed in pieces against other vehicles which we met with in the way. What was I to conjecture as to my

future destination? I judged that it was for no humane purpose that I was carried off, and in this I was not deceived. They talked in a boisterous manner, and so loudly, that notwithstanding the rattling of the carriage, some parts of the conversation I made out very distinctly: It turned upon hunting, they spoke with rapture of some late chace in which they had taken a part, and I soon became a topic, when, unfortunately, I could distinguish no more. We turned into a lane which conducted to a small village, and stopped before a farm-house. Several dogs were loitering about the road, and some sleeping upon the grass-plot before the door. These gave immediate intelligence of our approach by barking, and some had the audacity to raise themselves upon their hinder legs, and smell at my cage, until they

they were admonished to retire by the whip : but when the young man called aloud to the persons within the house, a whole pack from a kennel, in an adjoining meadow, returned such a lengthened howl, intermixed with barking, as made my blood run cold. The farmer quickly came forth with many hearty salutations ; they asked him if he would do them the favour to bring his dogs over the next morning, for they had a hare which they would turn out to begin with, and that afterwards they would engage to shew him abundance of sport ; he promised to comply with their request, and pressed them to alight ; but upon their refusal, insisted, at least, that they should drink with him before their departure. Liquor was immediately produced, and the conclusion of the farmer's hospitality was,

was, that the intoxication which had begun before, was now completely effected.

They parted with assurances of meeting early on the next day.— Away we flew, once more, with redoubled violence; and, if the wisdom of the animal who was driven, had not, in several instances, been superior to its driver, we must inevitably have been overthrown. It was dark before we arrived at the place of our destination, of which I could distinguish nothing clearly, only I heard two heavy gates opened at our approach. Having proceeded through these, they alighted, and I was delivered into the hands of a servant, with strict charge from my old tormentor as to my care until the morrow. They also told him that the hounds would then *cast off* near the house, when they intended

ed to turn me out, and ordered that their horses should be ready at an early hour in the morning.

CHAP. XIX.

Ill-fated youth, then whither wilt thou fly?
No friend, no shelter, now is nigh;
And onward rolls the storm.

BEATTIE.

THE prospect grew worse and worse. The last evil that threatened me had passed away; but another was in store by far more tremendous than the former. Instantaneous death, that at which thousands of beings would have trembled as a hard condition, but which I had so vehemently desired, since I must die by the hands of men, was denied

ed me. This consolation, such an one as it was, was removed, and supplanted by an evil of much greater magnitude. Still I found comfort in the faint hope, although the star to which I turned was certainly but obscure, that I might escape; and, whereas, in the former instance, this was entirely out of the question; in the present case, an opportunity was offered which might be improved to advantage.

Day-light came with all its horrors; I heard the noisy pack idly clamouring for some victim; and I was taken from a hay-loft in which I had been deposited, and where I had passed all the night. Then being privately conveyed to the field where it was intended I should commence my career, the dogs, with all their followers, soon after arrived at the same spot: these, as well as the horses and men, waited, with the
utmost

utmost impatience, for the moment when I should be set at liberty.— There was no delay: in an instant I felt myself upon the ground, and saw a multitude of mouths extended in pursuit of me; however, I had a chance of being able to elude them, and I was determined to sell my life as dearly as I could; but finding myself in a country with which I was unacquainted, I knew that I should meet with many disadvantages. I was ignorant of the meuses in these hedges; I understood not the winding of the coppices, but fled straight forward to the bottom of the field, where was a gate through which I slipped; and was glad to find, that by the time I reached this, my enemies, who had set out almost close at my heels, had not gone above half the distance. Through many more fields I fled with my utmost rapidity, and for some time,
along

along a road ; at first only attempting to evade, by swiftness, without putting into practice much of that cunning for which we are so renowned. And now, having gained a broomy thicket upon an eminence, I considered which way it would be best to bend my course, and stopped to take breadth.

The horn poured its dismal tones distinctly upon my ear ; the shouting drew nearer and nearer, and the whole body soon came in sight. I must not remain here : I perceived that they would not be long before they overtook me ; and I was astonished at the sagacity of the hound in scenting my footsteps.

The dryness of the road checked their ardor for a while, and here they *came to a fault*, the huntsmen dismounting, and attempting to trace the print of my feet in the dust. I observed them restrain the babblers
of

of the pack, and attend to those upon whose intelligence they could more securely rely; until a labourer in an adjacent field, who had watched my motions, called out to them, and pointed to the route which I had taken; then the pursuit was renewed. If the dogs came to a spot where I had doubled, they spread themselves abroad to catch the scent, and unravel the clue; and where I had proceeded in a straight line, they followed each behind the other with great regularity. It was necessary to resume my flight: not far off I beheld a wood that waved in the wind, and seemed to invite me. I pushed forward towards it; but first I ran in many a wily maze round and round the thicket, and then, with intention of confusing the scent, through a whole flock of sheep, who, hearing my pursuers, with

with a shew of opposition, were assembling together ; then racing in short circles, and returning, as it were, to the charge, faced about with a feigned boldness, towards that quarter whence the alarm had proceeded.

I was much deceived in my calculation of the distance of the wood to which I directed my course ; it was in reality, much farther off than I had imagined. I had a hollow of some extent to cross ; and, not having properly considered this—for, as in my hurry, I cast my eyes over it, the wood appeared much nearer than I afterwards found it to be ; my limbs began to relax, I felt a languor coming over me, and a shortness of breath, which demanded, immediate rest. I found the necessity of pausing for relief ; but the delay of a moment was dangerous : the tumult
raged

raged at no great distance behind me, and I could not think of meeting here with any repose, unless it were that of death. Before, my eyes was the place of my refuge; but I felt as though I could not gain it. How hard a case! Thus the vessel, tempest-tossed, beholds the harbour which she in vain attempts to enter, compelled to abide the fury of the storm.

CHAP. XX.

O ye woods!
To your deepest recesses I fly.

SHENSTONE.

HAVING gained a fallow that bordered upon the wood, I found it, for the present, absolutely impossible to advance any farther : my heaving lungs panted quick, and my heart beat violently, as if it would start from my side at each agitated throb. No longer lightly bounding along ; my limbs lost their vigour so rapidly, that if my enemy had been closer behind me, I must inevitably have perished ; already I had resigned myself to my fate, and lay close between some large clods of a friendly

ly

ly hue. Nearer and nearer the din approached, and I saw the whole train arrive heated and panting.

They were now so close to me, that a last effort, if any effort were ever to be made was immediately necessary. Being somewhat refreshed, by the few minutes during which I had rested, I arose. The uproar and agitation that was caused, by the sight of me is not to be described : still I was too nimble for the whole pack, who strained their feeble notes and wearied limbs after me in vain. I had just attained the gaol that my heart longed for, and was about to slip through a gate, when a horseman, the youth whose malice had been exerted against me in my younger days, out-stripping the rest, rode after me at full speed intending to prevent me from entering this place of refuge. He shouted

ed after me, and cracked his whip ; but I kept right onward, and he came up with me just as I was creeping under the gate. He spurred his hard-breathing horse with the greatest impetuosity, that he might leap over it, and turn me back again ; but the animal failing in his attempt, struck his fore-legs against the highest bar, he and his rider coming head-long to the ground ; and there lying entangled, rolling over one another. Luckily, I escaped unhurt ; and the confusion occasioned by this event, was much in my favour : nor, can I describe my joy when I discovered among the bushes innumerable cavities here and there scattered among the sandy soil, the abode of rabbits. I fled through the midst of them. What a delightful moment of relief when I perceived that what I had anticipated
had

had taken place ! The dogs immediately took different courses, and those that continued to pursue me, did not press on with so much ardor.

However, I was not yet to elude my followers. It is wonderful how they traced me through thickets and briars ; and now, that they had spread themselves through the wood, I was by no means out of jeopardy. Accident threw me several times in their way : I had, more than once, been compelled to start back at the corner of a bush upon seeing a dog before me ; and my peril was so great, that I resolved, at a favourable moment, to try once more the open plain. I had gained breadth by the delay, and felt my confidence revive.

On one side the thicket opened to a grassy meadow, where cattle were reposing, patiently chewing the cud,
or

or calmly attentive to the distant clamour. I stole away by the hedge side, and then through several fields, which bore marks of the highest cultivation and care, a green sward running through the midst of each. I flattered myself that my adversaries would give up the pursuit ; but my ears presently convinced me of the contrary : down a thistly bank I rushed into a lane, where, through the dust and gravel, I continued my flight : a barn stood at hand ; I was about to pass it ; one door stood half open, and some persons within were talking loudly, whilst others, as I afterwards saw, were wielding the flail.

From beneath the opposite hedge, a dog who was lying upon a heap of clothes, darted forward, and forced me (for where could I run for safety?) into the barn. No sooner had

had I entered than several men appeared to rescue me from the dog, who had caught me by the hinder legs, and was proceeding to destroy me. Without much resistance, I was taken, and one who seemed far superior to the rest, desired that I might be immediately carried into the house, and given into the hands of his daughter, with charge to take great care of me until he returned.

I was so faint and weary, that I found it useless to struggle against the grasp of a rustic, especially as I was about to be delivered at any rate from my impending danger. It signified little what was about to betide me, nothing could be worse than what I had so lately experienced.—We passed over a high stile into a small park and soon came within sight of the house, buried amid
I lofty

lofty elms, where a colony of rooks had fixed their residence, and made the air resound with their perpetual cawings. Having arrived at the door, the female, into whose care I was to be committed, was enquired for, and appeared with an eye that beamed with pity for my sufferings. After the delivery of the message, and two or three questions upon the subject of my being caught, the door of a small room was opened, and the man was desired to set me at liberty: he did so, and I crawled into a corner, severely pained in that part where the dog had seized me. In haste she ran to call her brothers, who appeared the children of compassion, surveying me with the most benignant looks of tenderness. The eldest of three was that benevolent youth who had before saved me from his destructive companion,

companion, and who still bore about him the marks of that painful hour ; for his arm was suspended in a sling, and over his features an interesting paleness was spread.

They were all instantly solicitous to give me relief ; some ran and brought me food, while others held me untill the sister had applied a balm to my wound. What a luxury to be tenderly treated when in pain ! but how much more so when we have just experienced barbarity !

Ask the traveller who has crossed, with difficulty, some savage region, where the natives have robbed him — have sought to enslave or murder him ? he will tell thee with what heartfelt satisfaction he has arrived upon the borders of some more hospitable land, where the tenderness of its inhabitants made

amends for his former ill-treatment; where he was warmed, clothed, and refreshed, and sent upon his way rejoicing.

CHAP. XXI.

I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

COWPER.

THEY had scarcely made an end of their humane efforts, and withdrawn from the room, when they came in again, and with them their father, the person to whom I owed my deliverance in the barn. As he entered, he said, "I would not advise you to go over immediately to
see

see your cousin, for it is necessary that he should be kept quiet ; I did not see him myself, and your presence may disturb him. I am extremely sorry that he should have met with this unfortunate accident ; but it may, in the end, prove of the utmost service to him, in warning him how he yields, for the future, to such cruel propensities.—But where is the object of your care ?

“ Here, Sir,” replied one, “ it has crept into this corner ; my sister has just bound up its leg, and it appears as if it would recover.”

“ Oh, that is right, I am glad of it ; we will not suffer the poor creature henceforth to want protection. Do you not remember that action of Xenocrates, who, when a chaced bird flew into his bosom, rescued it with much satisfaction, saying, that he had not betrayed a suppliant ?”

“ But, did not the huntsmen,” said my former benefactor, “ pursue their prey as far as the barn ?”

“ No ; they gave it up at a considerable distance, for they had hardly come within hearing ; when they withdrew another way, and, I understand, started another hare which conducted them quite a contrary course, and which they killed on the other side of the hill. It has given me much pleasure, my dear children, that none of you display an inclination for this barbarous diversion ; so long as you can amuse yourselves rationally, you will never have occasion to recur to it. This is the never-failing resource of the weak and the idle ; and, if habits of cruelty, swearing, and intoxication, were characteristics of a gentleman, than I would advise you to become sportsmen.”

“ Although

“ Although I do not mean, sir, to defend the practice,” said the youth, “ yet I think there is something highly exhilarating in the music of the pack and the sound of the horn.”

“ You are in the right, my dear ; it is inspiring—it incites ; but it is an impulse of feeling which does not allow us to reason ; and, if we were once to take into consideration the connection of these sounds with cruelty, we should no more receive delight from them, than we do from the drum and fife, when connected with the idea of cities sacked, and plains laid waste ; judgment certainly rejects this impulse, which will not endure dispassionate examination.—The cry of dogs upon the “ health-breathing hill” inspire us ; so does the sound of the trumpet : they both rouse our feelings ; we are led away, we
care

care not how, we know not whither; we spring over the fence, and scour along the plain; we seize the sword, and rush to the battle: our feelings are not always strictly right; they demand the aid of reflection to correct them; and, if we would deliberate a little more, we should avoid much sorrow. I confess that I have followed the chase: I have felt the ardor of it; but, when I reflected upon it, I was ashamed, and blushed to think upon my conduct: Indeed, as it is now pursued, I hold it unworthy of the liberal mind. Among nations who profess to be polished and humane, it should not find a place.

“ Among savages, hunting is the school of war. In pursuing the wild beast through the trackless forest, the Indian inures himself to toils and dangers; he endures heat and cold, fatigue

fatigue and hunger, and he exercises his courage in close combat with the ferocious animal ; he becomes skilful in drawing the bow ; it nerves his arm to wield the ponderous club ; and when he comes into the battle, he is able to encounter the haughtiest warriors, and to sustain the severities of the tedious march. Thus, of old, the Germans trained their youth to hardihood and valorous exploits, and to this the American tribes owe their strength and subsistence : here is an adequate reason for it ; but, among polished nations, what shall be said to apologize for a custom which has neither necessity, reason, or humanity on its side. We shall say, truly, that it is an amusement !—an amusement to torture a defenceless animal to death ! an amusement that consists in cruelty ! The Roman emperors, whose
innocent

innocent amusements were of this description, have been justly detested by posterity ; and we have been astonished, that Domitian should delight, in his solitary moments, to transfix flies, when he had no other creature upon which he could exercise his *humane* disposition. Now, in the case of the barbarian, hunting, as I before observed, is a means of subsistence to him ; but refined nations are shut out from this excuse : they have not to plead, in the same manner, the necessities of hunger ; and does it not seem strange, that civilized man, envious of the state of his savage neighbour, and aping it in this respect, should be so desirous of returning to the habits of his rudest condition ; are they to be envied ? Are they to be desired ? He would think it hard if he were compelled to return to them. If exercise

cise be the plea, let a man go to the plough ; this occupation is equally healthful, much more innocent, and infinitely more beneficial to society. There are methods enough of exertion, let him employ himself in any one that has not in it a mixture of barbarity : but the savage has yet another plea which we have not to boast—self-defence. If he did not sometimes take up arms against the wolf, the wolf might destroy him, ‘ the beast of prey : ’ blood-stained deserves to bleed ; ’ but what has the poor hare done ? in what hath it offended, that it should be thus persecuted, with yells, until it breathe out its last scream in despair ? If it be necessary to kill it, let death be speedily inflicted upon it ; let the thundering gun, levelled at it in its form, lay it low in an instant, and let it not be robbed of its

its life by inches: it is a sufficient stretch of power, that the life itself is taken away, without adding cruelty to necessity. In this respect, we might receive a very useful lesson from the hound: no dog that could seize its prey by an instantaneous spring, would employ an hour or two in hunting it down and prolonging its suffering. Into the hands of man are committed the sagacity of the dog, and the strength of the horse; but he is accountable for the use he makes of them, and should no more abuse them than he should the advantages of fire and iron, which are put into his power, and which, although highly beneficial to life when properly managed, are most detrimental when their end is perverted.

“ When we read some time ago, the natural history of the tiger, we thought it a most ungenerous animal ;

mal ; because, leaping by night into the fold, it satiates its hunger, and is not content ; it kills more than it can devour, and in the wantonness of slaughter plunges its head into the body of the expiring victim, and revels in blood. But how are human beings less wanton, when they are unsatisfied with killing for their wants, but must also slaughter for their pleasure ; when they go forth, amid beauty and harmony, their express purpose being to disturb and to destroy.

“ However, my children, we may cease to wonder that a harmless animal should be thus harassed, seeing that men have instituted persecutions against their own brethren, as their own annals relate. We may go to the pages of history for the dreadful truth. It is a melancholy picture of human nature, but I could

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shew you in the persecution under Lewis the Fourteenth of France, and our own queen Mary, *a few* instances in which innocent blood was shed. It was this same spirit that directed the torture of the martyrs ; that pointed where the fire would give the most exquisite pain, and where the red-hot pincers should tear the quivering muscle ; that added indignities to cruelties, violated all laws human and divine, depopulated cities, and rendered fertile plains a desert. But come, we lose time, let us go to our geography."

They then went out to their studies ; and left me to reflect upon the kind treatment I had experienced : I was doubly happy in existing beneath a roof that covered such benevolent beings. I felt no confinement. The humanity of the son
was

was only equalled by the humanity of the father ; and seeing this, I learned whence the youth had derived his merciful temper. What a blessing is a virtuous education !—a jewel that cannot be too highly prized : if a parent have permitted vice to increase in the mind of his child, he may, at his decease leave him in possession of apparent riches or honours, but he cannot bequeath happiness as his portion ; gold may attract the respect of flatterers ;—power may procure the fawning of sycophants ; but none of these can soothe that breast if virtue be away, and where she is these can be of no avail. An education of this kind is a more valuable inheritance from a parent than coffers or a kingdom. It is power : it is wealth ; such power and such wealth alone the heart of man ought to desire.

CHAP. XXII.

———— I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile.

BOWLES.

IN this situation I remained until the watchful benevolence of my guardians had completely restored me to my “ sound and pristine health.” Then no longer under any restraint, I was once more set at liberty to enjoy a security which I had hitherto never known. In the park of my benefactor, protected from all assaults, I enjoy all the advantages of liberty without its attendant dangers.

Undisturbed I take up my residence as inclination or the season invites.

invites. Mine is the sunny bank of firs, mine the dark shrubbery impervious to the noon-tide ray. Here neither the hourly fear of death nor of bondage is before my eyes : here autumn has no terrors, and winter itself is disarmed of its rigors. No dog nor man presumes to molest my quiet, and I dwell in the midst of many others of my own species, who abide beneath the shade of the same friendly retirement.

From my asylum I send forth these lessons into the world, that inexperienced youth may not confide too obstinately in their own strength, nor hastily adopt opinions, which they may be soon compelled to retract to their cost. It has also been my desire to warn them of the folly and madness of a cruel practice of which they perhaps never entertained a serious idea ;—

and to inform them that there is not wanting one among our race who, like the frog in the fable, addressing its wanton destroyers, can exclaim, "although it is sport to you, it is death to us." But that the picture of suffering which I have drawn may not be imagined too gloomy, let it be remembered, that in the midst of calamities which I thought too severe to be born, and when I conceived myself the most oppressed of creatures, I found others still more wretched than myself: nor let it ever be forgotten, whatever I, or the most rigid censor may have said, that heaven-born pity still abides upon the earth;—that there still exists such a quality as mercy among mankind.



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